



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Required Report - public distribution

Date: 11/21/2005

GAIN Report Number: PL5034

Poland

Biotechnology

International GMO Protest in Poland

2005

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Report Highlights:

The first well-publicized Greenpeace protest in Poland took place last Thursday against shipment of GMO soybean meal.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Warsaw [PL1]
[PL]

On Thursday, November 18, 2005, the first well-publicized Greenpeace protest in Poland took place against a shipment of GMO soybean meal from Argentina. Greenpeace activists temporarily blocked a Croatian ship loaded with the soybean meal from docking in Gdynia port. Several activists chained themselves to the ship while others surrounded it in seven inflatable boats to prevent it from berthing. According to the Polish Press Agency (PAP), approximately 30 protesters from 10 countries took part in the action, including protesters from Poland, Germany, Russia, Finland, and the Czech and Slovak Republics. The blockade was finally lifted due to deteriorating weather conditions. According to PAP, it was the largest such activity carried out in Poland. The protest received widespread media coverage in Poland, including on the evening news.

Interestingly, Poland has been importing soybean meal from GMO soybeans for years without problem or protest. In recent years, Poland has imported about 1.5 MMT of soybean meal annually, mainly from the EU and South America. Occasionally, some poultry producers in Poland would advertise the fact that they used "GMO free" feed. However, such publicity was never given much attention. Recently elected GOP officials are on record as opposing GMO technology because they believe it could adversely impact attempts to market the "naturalness" of Polish agricultural exports, an image they believe will continue to boost sales of Polish agricultural products to other EU countries. They also strongly support organic farming and small farms in general, both of which they believe will be harmed, not helped, by GMO technology. The EU is the largest market for Polish agricultural exports, account for 72 percent of such exports in 2004.

Despite the recent protest, biotechnology is not a major issue in the local press and we do not expect this to change in the near future.